



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director



RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: **3012445**

Address: **4251 Aurora Avenue North**

Applicant: **N 3 Architects, LLC**

Date of Meeting: **Monday, April 23, 2012**

Board Members Present: **Ted Panton (Chair)**
Ellen Cecil
Jerry Coburn
Mike DeLilla
David Neiman

DPD Staff Present: **Colin R. Vasquez, Senior Land Use Planner**

Site Zone: **C1-40**

Nearby Zones: (North) **C1-40**
(South) **C1-40**
(East) **C1-40**
(West) **LR2**

Lot Area: **13,319 SF**



Current
Development: **Thunderbird Motel (vacant)**

Access: **N. 43rd St. and N. Motor Pl.**

Surrounding
Development: **Single family, lower scale apartment buildings, as well as some, commercial, mixed-use residential development.**

ECAs: **None**

Neighborhood
Character: **Development to the North, South, and East is a mixture of large mixed-use residential and small to medium size commercial buildings. Development to the West is a mixture of single family houses and small apartment buildings.**

RECOMMENATION MEETING: APRIL 23, 2012
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed 71-unit structure shows four floors of residential use with a roof deck. Ground floor residential amenity areas (fitness room, multi-use room, and accessory offices) occupy the eastern half of the site and at grade parking occupies the western half of the site. The residential units on floors two to four are set-back 15 feet from the west property line and cantilever over the parking area.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public attended this Recommendation meeting.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

A. Site Planning

A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.

At the Early Design Guidance meeting, The Board discussed privacy issues from the roof and west elevation. The discussion focused on the use of ground level vegetation,

location of upper level windows and interior layout of units to increase privacy. The Board requested that at the next Board meeting — the site plan show topography, an East to West site section, and full building footprint in relation to other buildings.

At the Recommendation meeting, The Board recommended that the final location of the larger trees to be installed along the western property line be resolved with staff.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

- B-1 Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility.** Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.

At the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board discussed vegetation and other methods for screening. Include modulation along the west facade to break down scale. Look at method to reduce the feel of the large cantilever.

At the Recommendation meeting, the Board recommended that changes in material/colors be made to the west façade to be more aligned with the material pattern as reflected in the gate/fence on the northern portion of the property.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

- C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency.** Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.

At the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board discussed the use of colors and materials. Consider the Thunderbird Motel icon elements as a “road town”. Show fence design, show color elevations on 4 sides.

At the Recommendation meeting, the Board was generally pleased with the use of colors and materials. However, they recommended additional changes to the colors on the west façade.

- C-3 Human Scale.** The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.

At the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board emphasized incorporating modulation to break down the scale of the building.

At the Recommendation meeting, the Board was satisfied that the changes incorporated into the design responded to their earlier guidance.

D. Pedestrian Environment

- D-2 Blank Walls.** Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.

At the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board discussed the use of fenestration or materials, where possible in the façades to mitigate the appearance of blank walls.

At the Recommendation meeting, the Board was satisfied with the use materials and colors used to minimize the blank wall appearances along the northern and southern facades.

- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas.** Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.

At the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board requested applicant contact SPU for trash pickup protocols and show location of the trash room and access.

At the Recommendation meeting, the Board was satisfied with the applicant's explanation for the trash pickup protocols and the location of the trash room and access.

- D-7 Personal Safety and Security.** Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

At the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board discussed the need to address safety, surveillance and security at the parking area and roof garden. Provide a lighting plan to show adequate lighting.

At the Recommendation meeting, the Board was satisfied with the applicant's response to their guidance.

- D-11 Commercial Transparency.** Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.

At the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board discussed the requirement for transparency on the street level façade along Aurora Ave, N. Motor Pl and N. 43rd St. At the next Board meeting — show interior layout to verify uses allow for transparency requirements.

At the Recommendation meeting, the Board was satisfied with the transparency provided on the street level façades and the interior layout for the proposed uses.

E. Landscaping

E-3 Landscaping Design to Address Special Site Conditions. The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.

At the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board discussed allowing a reduction in the commercial space depth requirement of 30' in order to maintain the 5' landscape buffer at west property line. The Board emphasized that parking/landscape area should be a designed space that acts as a buffer, but also creates a positive space.

At the Recommendation meeting, the Board recommended that Departures be granted for the commercial space depth. Generally, they were satisfied with the landscaping buffer along the west property line. See recommendation under A-5.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departures were suggested but yet formally requested:

- 1. The Code requires residential uses along street-level street-facing facade when facing an arterial not exceed 20%. The applicant proposes 100% residential uses at street-level street-facing facade and designs the overall street level to meet commercial requirements including height and transparency.**

The Board voted unanimously in favor of the departure to allow an increase in residential uses at street-level with a design that meets other related commercial street-level standards. (Relates to C-2, C-3, D-7, and D-11)

2. The Code requires non-residential uses along street-level extend an average of 30' and a minimum of 15'.

The Board voted unanimously in favor of the departure to allow the 30' requirement be reduced to move the structure closure to the east property line and allow for better design parking area and the 5' landscape buffer at the west property line and parking. (Relates to C-2, C-3, D-7, and D-11)

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Board made the following recommendations:

1. The location, size, and species of trees used along the west property line should be specified and designed to provide screening and privacy for the adjacent residential users. .
2. The colors used on the western façade should be color modulated to visually segment the length of the façade.
3. The windows on the western façade should be re-sized to a 'typical residential size'.